



LOUIS LARSEN

**FIRST EXHIBITION**  
**Paintings by Louis Larsen**

March 26 and 27, 1965

100 Main Street  
Sussex, New Jersey

**COMMITTEE:**

**THEODORE F. HOLBERT**

**CARROLL O. DAILEY**

**MAC CAULEY CONNOR**

The committee is grateful to the owners who have lent their paintings for this show. We also appreciate the assistance offered by Miss Kathryn E. Gamble, Director, Montclair Art Museum.

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Louis Larsen was born "Lauritz Larsen Mossige" on August 24, 1863, at Sandnes, Norway. This small village is situated at the head of Stavenger Fiord (painting 5) on the southern tip of the country.

Larsen came to America in the early 1880's. He may have stayed in New York City for a time painting stage scenery. He arrived in Sussex County about 1885. He first appeared at the Simeon Mabee farm near Harmonyvale, (paintings 1 and 2). His earliest Sussex County works are of that neighborhood. He came to Sussex, then Deckertown, about 1887 and remained until his death, December 10, 1932.

Louis Larsen is known to have painted in the Stavenger area before he came to America.

In the 1920's the Norwegian newspaper "Stavangeren" exhibited one of his paintings, attributing it to a Lars Hertlervig. The error was brought to the attention of the paper and it then acknowledged this as the work of "Stavangermaler Lauritz Mossige."

Letters from relatives in the United States and Norway indicated that Larsen sent many paintings to them.

We hope this unusual view of the Sussex County story will be pleasant for you. We feel that these words explain the larger meaning of an exhibition of this kind:

"The one-man show, which brings together multiple examples of of a single artist's works, is the way we judge an artist's caliber, rather than by emphasis upon an individual masterpiece. Indeed, the day of masterpieces seems to be past. Art becomes a continuing series of action, really a way of life, rather than the creation of specific monuments."

— from CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE, University of Illinois Press, 1962 by permission Mr. Weller.

## A New Intrest In Larsen

A revival of public interest in Larsen's paintings began about 1949 with Beatrice F. Smith.

Miss Smith's father and mother owned and operated the "Union House" during the late 1800's when Larsen first came to Sussex. A frequent visitor to local bar-rooms, Larsen was commissioned by Mr. Smith to paint several scenes of Deckertown. These paintings were hung in the public rooms of the hotel.

In 1909, when the Smiths sold the hotel and moved to Hamburg Avenue, the paintings were taken down and stored in their attic, remaining there for many years. They were re-discovered after World War II, when the house was remodeled into a two-family residence. At that time Miss Smith decided to preserve Larsen's memory by having them hung in a public place for everyone to enjoy. Charles O. Couse, then mayor of Sussex, agreed to let them be displayed in the council rooms of the borough hall.

Originally, there were five paintings in the group. One mysteriously disappeared and another, a large (6x4) landscape, was destroyed after it fell over the janitor's head when he was cleaning. Unfortunately, the janitor failed to report the mishap until he had burned the painting.

After the loss of two paintings, Theodore F. Holbert arranged to have the remaining three displayed at the Farmers National Bank (now The Bank of Sussex County). Since these paintings have been on display in the lobby, many people have rediscovered their own Larsens, finding them in sheds, basements, attics — one in an art shop in New York City.

### 1. SIMEON MABEE FARM

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew W. Roy

This and its companion (2) are the first painted in Sussex County and are also among the few unsigned.

### 2. SIMEON MABEE FARM

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. William A. Roy

On this farm the painter first lived and was taught to speak English.

### 3. SIMEON MABEE

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew W. Roy

A companion portrait of Mrs. Mabee, painted on oil cloth, was destroyed several years ago after the design of the oil cloth came through the face of the painting. Larsen's billheads listed portrait painting, but this is the only one known to exist.

### 4. WINTER SCENE OF NORWAY

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew W. Roy

One of two signed "Mossige". Larsen occasionally painted scenes of his homeland from memory. This is one of few winter pictures, although many were painted during the winter showing the summer season.

### 5. FIORD — NORWAY 1886

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew W. Roy

Probably Stavanger Fiord and Larsen's hometown, Sandnes. The artist told of often seeing the old man cross the foot bridge.

### 6. KEMBLE HOUSE Monroe '86

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. Lester W. Wesighan

This house, near Mabee Farm (1 and 2) is one of first local farm scenes.

**7. WILSON FARM (recently Albert Post) '86**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Holbert**

A horse and buggy often embellish Larsen's work, although they were not always actually there at the time. The artist, who just liked horses, fondly added them.

**8. HAMBURGH HOUSE**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. George W. Hamm**

This hotel stood where Hill's Gasoline Station is today. This painting was rolled up and stored in a barn for many years before Mr. Hamm recovered it.

**9. GEORGE ARMSTRONG FARM '87**

— lent by **Mrs. Fred Armstrong**

This was painted in Larsen's most productive year. This fine painting records much farm life of eighty years ago.

**10. GEORGE ARMSTRONG FARM '87**

— lent by **Mrs. Fred Armstrong**

The farm has been in the Armstrong family since Revolutionary times.

**11. MAIN STREET - DECKERTOWN (Now Sussex) '87**

— lent by **Miss Beatrice F. Smith**

View looking north from Union House (see 12 and 14) The stone building housed the town bakery at the time of this painting. The baker's wife, Laura, is in the front doorway. "Kidley," the baker, is in the side doorway talking to another woman. It is known that the baker and his wife were married and divorced three times. It has been said that Larsen is showing the cause of the discord — "the other woman".

**12. UNION HOUSE '87**

— lent by **Miss Beatrice F. Smith**

View from rear of hotel. Larsen's feeling about America is probably expressed by the exaggerated size of the flag and its many stripes.

**13. HULSE A. BERRY FARM '87**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Roy Berry**

This farm is one-half mile south of Sussex. Mr. Hulse A. Berry was an ardent horseman. Larsen often posed his subjects. Note new railroad in background and the many hitching posts.

**14. UNION HOUSE '87**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Carroll O. Dailey**

The man driving the sulky is Sam Harrison, a local horse trainer. A story is told that one day at the circus, Jim Feakes "took" Pierce Cole's girl, and, thereafter, Pierce would have nothing more to do with women. He moved into permanent bachelor's quarters at the Union House where he lived out his days. Pierce Cole is sitting on the porch in this picture. His room was the last one on the left of the second story. According to the sign on the carriage shed parking was a problem in 1887.

**15. FULLER FARM (near State Line, Unionville) '87**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Carroll O. Dailey**

This together with number 19 are the only known twin paintings still in existence. Note four kinds of fencing.

**16. MAIN STREET HOUSE  
(probably Dr. Alexander Linn house) '87**

— lent by **Mrs. Cleveland Dunn**

One of the rare town houses in collection. Larsen often painted a picture after painting the house.

**17. DECAMP HOTEL (Fountain Square Inn) '87**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Holbert**

Deckertown, the terminal of the railroad from New York, was a popular stopover for "drummers". Note station wagon.

**18. NICOLAS COX HOMESTEAD '87**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Holbert**

This farm is on a back road between Quarryville and Unionville. (see 25)

**19. FULLER FARM '87**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Losey**

This is the "twin" to number 15. Some detailing in this picture is not in the other.

**20. McCOY HOMESTEAD Papakating '87**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. R. Parker McCoy**

There were four Larsens of this farm and this is the only one found. Mirandy McCoy Crane and Martha McCoy are on the porch. Anna and Parker S. McCoy are on horseback.

**21. MABIE HOMESTEAD '87**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. R. Parker McCoy**

This house is now the Lake Windsor office. Nina Mabie Havens is in the buggy. This farm was probably part of original Mabie farmland (see 1 and 2).

**22. DELAWARE WATER GAP '87**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Harry Morrison**

The impression the Water Gap made on Louis Larsen was such that for many years he displayed an eight by five foot painting on the outside of his shop on Main Street.

**23. NEWMAN BENJAMIN STORE & POST OFFICE (Beaver Run) '87**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Harry Simpson**

The store and post office are intact and the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Anderson expect to preserve them.

**24. VAN NESS FARM (Plains Road) '87**

— lent by **Mrs. Roe Van Ness**

Another excellent work of 1887. There are 16 of this year in the exhibit.

**25. JAMES COX FARM '91**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore M. Holbert**

James Cox, with beard, and Mrs. Cox pictured were Mr. Holbert's grandparents. Note beehives in backyard.

**26. NORWEGIAN SCENE '92**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Harry Morrison**

Exact location is unknown.

**27. DECKERTOWN (looking east) '92**

— lent by **Miss Beatrice F. Smith**

Union House is yellow frame building left center, Baptist Church is right center. School was replaced by brick grammar school of today. Many other buildings in this picture are still in use.

**28. UNKNOWN RIVER WITH FALLS '92**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore M. Holbert**

This was part of original Smith collection. The falls seem quite out of place with the still river, which resembles the Walkkill.

**29. ISLE OF MAN '95**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Carroll O. Dalley**

This and number 30 were copied by Larsen from small water colors (10 x 14 inches). Since the originals were not in detail these are works of Larsen's imagination.

**30. ISLE OF MAN '95**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Carroll O. Dalley**

**31. BEAVER LAKE '96**

— lent by **Beaver Lake Association**

Larsen fished here once and happily remembered the day during the winter by painting this summer picture.

**32. LAKE RUTHERFORD '96**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Holbert**

One of the many scenes of local lakes and rivers.

**33. CULVERS LAKE '97**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Holbert**

The club house is shown with its large flag. Painted on wood.

**34. BIRD DOG '98**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Donald J. Feaster**

This painting was found under the porch of the John D. Shorter cottage at Lake Pochuck by Mr. Feaster when he bought the cottage.

**35. DECKER POND (Lake Pochuck) '99**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Richard Edsall**

One of Larsen's favorite fishing spots. Mr. and Mrs. Martin Mabie are shown in boat.

**36. JOSEPH SHARP FARM**

— lent by **Mrs. Clarence Little**

This is "lower Little farm". A chimney fire scorched this painting.

**37. UNIDENTIFIED LAKE**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore M. Holbert**

This may be a scene from Norway.

**38. SKULL, FORCEPS AND DATE BOOK '89**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Holbert**

Larsen painted these articles as they probably were placed on Dr. J. D. Haggerty's office desk. The only still life known. Done on wood.

**39. SAM VANDRUFF FARM '01**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Harry Beemer**

This farm was a favorite of Larsen's. There are four known paintings of this farm. See 40, 46 and 47.

**40. SAM VANDRUFF FARM '07**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Holbert**

The right hand drive auto is driven by Samuel S. Vandruff. Almost every known farm animal can be found in this picture.

**41. HOLBERT HOMESTEAD, Elmira, New York '11**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore M. Holbert**

This painting was copied from a postcard. The farm is now suburban Elmira. The second story has been removed.

**42. LAKE SCENE '11**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Holbert**

This lake has not been identified.

**43. LAYTON HOMESTEAD '15**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Constable**

This Wallkill Valley farm scene was found in an antique shop.

**44. EDWARD RUTAN HOUSE  
East Main Street, Deckertown '15**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Bennett**

Good view of houses in Deckertown. Many are still recognizable.

**45. BROOKCROFT '15**

— lent by **Mrs. Clarence E. Brown**

This is one of few stone houses built in this area of Sussex County. It probably was built late in the eighteenth century. It is known as the Brown summer home in "the Clove."

**46. SAM VANDRUFF FARM '16**

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Slaughter

Larsen offered to paint the farm for Mr. Slaughter "cheap". He sketched it one winter day in deep snow and finished it as a summer scene in two days. The picture cost \$15, the frame, \$3.

**47. SAM VANDRUFF FARM '16**

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. McCauley Conner

This last of the Vandruff farm was rescued from a trash pile. It now hangs in the owners house in New York City.

**48. WALLKILL RIVER  
(Lehigh and New England RR Bridge)**

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Morrison

The river was a favorite of Larsen. He fished there frequently. The farm is the Elston Homestead and is now owned by Ole Landrud.

**49. BEEMER FARM '16**

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Beemer

This picture was commissioned by Mr. Beemer's father. There are two other paintings done in this year of scenes on the Lewisburg-Beemerville Road. See 50 and 52.

**50. WOODBOURNE POND '16**

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. F. Dixon Dalley

This pond was the water supply for power plant on site of what is today Denbrook Pond.

**51. LINK HOMESTEAD '16**

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Link

The many stone walls are typical of the early farms.

**52. HAGGERTY HOMESTEAD '16**

— lent by Dr. and Mrs. Jack S. Haggerty

This pictures a typical large dairy farm of the time and includes a good view of Sunrise Mountain.

**53. LEWIS VAN SICKLE FARM '16**

— lent by Mrs. Walter O. Havens

Larsen and Mr. VanSickle were good friends and the painter often came up on the train from Deckertown for a day long visit, returning on the afternoon train. The gray team is an addition of Larsen's imagination.

**54. COURTRIGHT FARM '16**

— lent by Mrs. Emmett Ferguson

When Larsen delivered this painting its wrappings were on fire. As he was in an inebriated condition, the fire was unnoticed by the painter. Fortunately, the painting was unharmed. The dog is "Toby". Larsen told Mrs. Ferguson that the horse was "Dan Patch."

**55. CLOVE BROOK Mill Street, Deckertown**

— lent by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Beemer

"Mrs. Jarvis" is on the bank and "Mr. Jarvis" is in the boat. A boat on this small stream demonstrates Larsen's flair for humor and imagination.

**56. FARM SCENE**

— lent by Mrs. Emma Roome

This painting of unknown location was purchased by Mrs. Roome at a church rummage sale.

**57. FIORD '21**

— lent by Mrs. Clarence Stanton

This painting was a gift from Larsen to Mr. Stanton. It is done on composition board.

**58. HOWARD SWARTS FARM '21**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Dussler**

This painting was a wedding present to Mrs. Dussler.  
It cost forty dollars.

**59. LAKE POCHUCK '22**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Holbert**

A favorite Larsen fishing spot.

**60. HIGH POINT '29**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Holbert**

This picture shows Kuser Mansion and Lake Marcia  
from the site of High Point Monument.

**61. EVERY FISHERMAN'S DREAM**

— lent by **Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Holbert**

This is the last known Larsen. It was painted from  
his fishing (card playing and drinking) shack on Pa-  
pakating Creek at Berry's Cove.

**62. DELAWARE WATER GAP**

— lent by **Mr. Churchill Harden**

This painting was hung in the back of Weed's Rest-  
aurant where it remained for 25 years.



